तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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An Injunction for all Krishna Conscious Centers

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

If one has the proper means and wealth, he should occasionally invite the devotees of Lord Chaitanya who are engaged in preaching all over the world and hold a festival at home simply by distributing *prasādam* and talking about Krishna during the day and holding congregational chanting for at least three hours in the evening. This procedure must be adopted in all centers of the Krishna consciousness movement. Thus they will daily perform *saṅkīrtana-yajña*. In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.5.32) the daily performance of *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is recommended for this age (*yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ*). One should worship Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His four associates, the *pañca-tattva*, by distributing *prasādam* and holding congregational chanting. Indeed, that *yajña* or sacrifice is most recommended in this Age of Kali. In this age, other *yajñas* are not possible to perform, but this *yajña* can be performed everywhere and anywhere without difficulty. ❀

— Purport to *Cc. madhya* 3.203.

Attraction

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Question: Whom does Krishna attract?

Srila Prabhupada: The personality called "Krishna" attracts the three worlds. It is reality that attracts. Whom does Krishna attract? Magnets attract iron; they will not attract wood. Similarly, the worshipable Lord attracts the servitors, who are eager to serve him, to worship him. The servitors are attracted by the charm of service. But if the servitor is distracted from the path by something else, then this original attraction will evade him. On one side there is the attraction of the material world, which is the cause of all bondage; on the other side there is the attraction of Krishna, which is the cause of all bliss. In this world, the objects of the senses — the form, the smell, the touch, the sounds of external objects — are very close to me. That is why I, the weak person, become attached to them. Under the circumstances,

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only if we can continuously hear about the Supreme Lord from guru and *sādhu* can we be protected from these nearby enemies. If we are not attracted by the lotus feet of Krishna then we will definitely be attracted by *māyā*. When Krishna's name, form and pastimes attract us then we will get some relief from our present role as the enjoyer, as imitation Krishnas. The more we discuss topics of Krishna the more we will get rid of this false identity of ourselves as the enjoyer. Then Krishna will really attract us. ✿

— Excerpted from *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur*. Mandala Publishing Group. Eugene, Oregon. 1997.

The Inevitable Degradation of Religion

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

[Addressing a "dear critic":] You nobly point to the immoral deeds of some common and perverted *vairāgīs* who shamelessly call themselves "the followers of the *Bhāgavata* and the great Chaitanya". You nobly tell us that unless Vyasa is purely explained he may lead thousands of men into great trouble in times to come. But, dear critic, study the history of ages and countries! Where have you found the philosopher and the reformer fully understood by the people?

The popular religion is fear of God and not the pure spiritual love which Plato, Vyasa, Jesus, and Chaitanya taught to their respective peoples. Whether you give the absolute religion in figures, or simple expressions, or teach it by means of books or oral speeches, the ignorant and the thoughtless must degrade it. ✿

— From an English lecture delivered in 1869 at Dinajpur, West Bengal. Printed in *The Bhagavata*. Gaudiya Mission. Baghbazar, Calcutta. 1982.

Become Worthy

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

I am not qualified, but when my Guru Maharaja gives me a task I should make myself qualified, otherwise I will lose what I have. Krishna is like a brightly burning effulgent sun. If you do not deserve, if you don't qualify yourself, how can you remain before this blazing sun? You'll be burnt to ashes. First, qualify yourself.

You should be serious, "How can I be qualified enough to carry out what my guru maharaja has given to me and in this way deserve Krishna?" This is most important. But you never try for it. You are never conscious of it. You think, "Oh, I am now a very great *paramahaṁsa*." Instead, you should cry, "How can I become qualified and worthy? Otherwise I will not be able to keep what my guru has given me."

There is a story about a crow that once saw a ripe bitter melon plant. Although it tastes bitter, it is very nice. The crow wanted to have it. He went to the plant, "Please, I want to take this ripened fruit."

The plant said, "You can't have it."

"Why?"

"It requires much work to produce such a fruit. The gardener has prepared the ground and planted the seed. With watering, it gradually germinated. This creeper developed, then flowered. Fruits came and ripened. How can you expect to get these things all of a sudden? First you must prepare the ground with a plow and make it nice. Then make a fence, clean and root out the weeds and put the seed. Water it regularly and the seed will germinate. Then there will be flowers, and then you will get the ripened fruit. Otherwise, how can you get it?"

"All right, all right. What do I have to do?"

"You should first plow the ground for sowing the seed."

"So a plow is required. How can I get a plow?"

The plow is wooden and has an iron part that is required to make furrows in the ground. The blacksmith puts the iron in the fire, makes it red hot, and then beats it with a big hammer.

The crow went to the blacksmith, "Please give me that iron so I can take it to the carpenter, make a plow, and plow the land." The blacksmith had the iron in the fire. It was red hot. He said, "Are you qualified to take this burning iron?"

"Oh, yes."

"Can you take it now? It will burn you if you are not worthy."

He said, "Yes, please give it to me. I am all right."

The blacksmith gave him the iron and the crow was burnt to ashes — finished.

You are not worthy. You are not qualified enough. How can you take this thing? First, qualify yourself. Make yourself worthy. Guru is giving you Hari — Krishna, but you should take care of him or else the reverse effect will be there. There are *aparādhas* to watch for and regulative principles to be maintained. Associate with *sādhus,* chant the holy name, hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* — engage yourself 24 hours a day in the loving service of the Lord under the guidance of a bona-fide *sādhu vaiṣṇava guru*. It is a razor-edged path, very sharp. If there is the slightest negligence you will fall down from the path. Guru has said all these things and you should follow, accept it as it is and make yourself worthy. But you are not doing anything. You are not following the instruction of guru. You are thinking, "Oh, now I have gotten everything." If you think like that then you will lose whatever you have gained.

Devotee: Some devotees say that now that Srila Prabhupada has left they don't know how to get his mercy and they are not sure what to do. In reply you said that if someone is really eager, their guru can appear in different forms to help. Can you explain?

Gour Govinda Swami: This is a most important question. You can see your guru if you have developed the right vision. Prahlad Maharaja saw the Supreme Lord in a stone pillar. But his father saw only the stone. You can see your guru if you are really eager to see him. "Yes, my guru is here. He is speaking to me." If you are really thirsty you will cry for water and run, "Where is water? Where is water?" This is real eagerness. In the same way, if you are eager for your guru's instruction then you will be able to see how he is there. He will give you instructions. He will definitely impart knowledge.

Devotee: In the form of *sādhu* and *śāstra*?

Gour Govinda Swami: Just like *śāstra* is always there and *sādhu* is always there, similarly, guru is always there. He is eternal. But you are not eager. You have no thirst, so how can you get water? You are not eager for water, so how can you get water? "Oh, I have gotten. I have no thirst." This mentality is very dangerous. You think yourself so great. You are puffed up. You are not humble at all. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*ādi* 17.31), Mahaprabhu says:

tṛṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

This is a very important thing. Kaviraj Goswami says, make a garland of this verse, put it around your neck, and do *hari-bhajana*. Otherwise you are not doing *hari-bhajana* at all. You are not feeling lower than the grass, you are not more tolerant than a tree, you are not free of false pride, and you are not giving respect to all. So how will you do *hari-bhajana*? But you say, "Oh I am doing *hari-bhajana.* I am doing. I am doing." This is not *bhajana*. ❀

— From a *darśana* in Bhubaneswar. 14 November 1991.

Why Devotees Sometimes Suffer

Srila Sanatan Goswami's

Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta. 1.4.75

By sending poison and many other calamities, one after another, to trouble them from their childhood, the Lord deliberately showed the Pandavas' determination, religion, fame, wisdom, devotion, and ecstatic love.

COMMENTARY: As the invisible Supersoul, Lord Krishna arranged for the Pandavas to undergo many troubles. He did this, however, only to broadcast their glories forever throughout the world. The Lord's pure devotees never perish, and what seems to be their suffering in this world is only for their benefit and glorification. ❀

— Translation and commentary by Sri Gopiparanadhana Das. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles. 2002.

The Blind Men and The Elephant

John Godfrey Saxe

"The Blind Men and the Elephant", is one of the best-known poems of John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887), an American poet, writer, and editor. It is based on a famous Indian parable.

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The first approached the elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The second, feeling of the tusk
Cried, "Ho! what have we here,
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up he spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee:
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope.
"I see," quoth he, "the elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!

Moral:
So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an elephant
Not one of them has seen. ❀

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BY SERVING THE GREAT

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.18.18

aho vayaṁ janma-bhṛto 'dya hāsma
vṛddhānuvṛttyāpi viloma-jātāḥ
dauṣkulyam ādhiṁ vidhunoti śīghraṁ
mahattamānām abhidhāna-yogaḥ

[Suta Goswami said:] O God, although we are born in a mixed caste, we are still promoted in birthright simply by serving and following the great who are advanced in knowledge. Even by conversing with such great souls one can without delay cleanse oneself of all disqualifications resulting from lower births. ❀

— Translation by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Singapore. 1982.